

## **Summary Minutes**

### **Alexandria Waterfront Committee Meeting Tuesday, September 20, 2011**

#### **Alexandria City Hall**

#### **Members**

**Present:** Engin Artemel, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.  
Kent Barnekov, Alexandria Seaport Foundation  
Christine Bernstein, Founders Park Community Association  
Linda Hafer, Old Town Business Association  
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce  
Nathan Macek, At-large citizen and Chair  
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)  
Peter Pennington, Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)  
Pete Peterson, Alexandria Archaeological Commission  
Paul Smedberg, Alexandria City Council  
Van Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association

**Excused:** William Cromley, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission  
Arthur Fox, Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.  
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina pleasure boat lease holder

**Vacancy:** Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.

**City Staff:** Lt. Mark Bergin, Police Department  
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks, Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA  
Karl Moritz, Planning & Zoning (P&Z)

**Guests:** Brian Buzell, resident  
Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee  
Harry Harrington, Old Dominion Boat Club  
Mike Young, 6 Prince Street

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

The Committee was called to order at 7:30 a.m. and Members and guests introduced themselves.

#### **Approval of Minutes from June 21 and June 29, 2011 Meetings**

Moved by Pennington seconded by Hall, to approve the summary minutes of both meetings, with a correction to page 1 of the June 21 minutes changing "Old Town Boat Club" to "Old Dominion Boat Club." The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### **Committee Organization**

##### **Membership**

Macek reported Arthur Fox's appointment to the Committee as a representative of the neighborhood south of King Street and East of Washington Street, the seat previously held by Mel Fortney. Applications are being accepted for the seat previously held by Jay Atkinson, the neighborhood north of King Street and east of Washington Street. Macek encouraged

members to publicize the vacancy to people whom they thought might be interested in serving on the Committee.

### **Public Discussion Policy**

Members considered whether to approve a formal Committee procedure for public comment at Committee meetings.

Historically the Committee has handled public comments informally—inviting comments, usually at a meeting's end, after Committee discussion of agenda items had finished. The practice has worked well for the customarily small number of guests at most Committee meetings, but the Committee has been interested in developing more formal guidelines for public comments to ensure that, especially when a meeting attracts a larger number of guests wishing to speak, the Committee has a written procedure governing public comment.

Several options were discussed, including: (a) inviting guest comments on each agenda item after Committee members have finished their discussion, with individual comments not to exceed three minutes; (b) continuing to take guest comments informally for meetings with few guests wishing to speak, with the total time for public comments not to exceed 15 minutes for any given agenda item unless extended by the Committee; (c) whether and when to hear guest comments on issues not on the agenda; and (d) whether guest comments should be a fixed agenda item at a meeting's start (the Environmental Policy Commission's procedure as noted by Pennington), an agenda item at the end of each meeting, or accepted as each agenda item is discussed.

Moved by Hall, seconded by Manor, that it is the Committee consensus that at meetings Committee members should be first to speak on any agenda item, followed by staff, and then the public; that 15 minutes will be the total time allotted for public comment on any one agenda item; that additional time could be granted by majority vote of the Committee; and that public comment and announcements will be at the end of the meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Van Fleet asked that Members be advised in advance when a Committee member is planning to represent the Committee before another entity. Van Fleet noted that Pennington, the Committee Vice-Chair, presented the Committee's position on the Waterfront Plan at a September 14 community meeting held by the Waterfront Plan Work Group (WPWG).

Macek said he had asked Pennington to present the Committee position to WPWG because he, as Committee Chair, sits on WPWG as the Committee's representative. Ordinarily such an appearance would have been announced in advance at the monthly Committee meeting preceding the appearance, but the Committee had not met since its June 29 meeting at which Members had agreed upon a Committee position that would be presented to the WPWG. As with all such appearances, the Member representing the Committee presented only issue positions previously approved by the full Committee, and the Committee was informed of Pennington's role via email in advance of the WPWG meeting.

### **Marina Operations Public Meeting**

Following up on the Committee's decision the previous spring to schedule a meeting with slip-holders and RPCA staff to facilitate direct feedback regarding concerns, satisfactions, and

recommendations about Marina operations, members discussed the importance of scheduling a meeting as soon as possible so that summer experiences remained fresh in people's minds and slip-holder feedback could be incorporated into planning for the next spring.

Macek said a meeting within six to eight weeks was likely, and the public meeting was subsequently scheduled for the evening of November 3 at City Hall.

### **Report from Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)**

#### **Marina Pilings**

RPCA staff reported that permits for the replacement pilings are in hand and RPCA has initiated procurement. There was no progress to report regarding pilings for the dock for the Potomac Riverboat Company's historic skipjack Minnie V. RPCA is working with the National Park Service to move the project ahead.

#### **Marina Security**

RPCA has reported that the Marina's new camera-based security system is up and running and staff are monitoring Marina activities by webcam. Work to install additional cameras is in progress. Public access to the camera views via the Web is expected.

Macek offered to check with RPCA weekly regarding the status of work to complete installation of the Marina camera system.

In response to questions, Bergin said the new Marina cameras should provide pictures of sufficient quality to be useful as evidence in prosecutions related to Marina security violations. As to whether closed circuit television coverage on the docks might constitute a privacy violation, Bergin said that because the Marina cameras target public areas of the dock, people in these areas should have no expectation of privacy, which is the standard that courts have used to date when considering this issue.

RPCA staff volunteered to provide a sample of Marina security camera images for the Committee's information at its October meeting.

Hixon provided updates on the following maintenance-related issues: the Torpedo Factory has a new General Services building manager, Wayne Wu, who is effectively addressing a variety of maintenance issues such as the flooding problem in the alley between the Food Pavilion and the Charthouse and a variety of dock repairs. The Marina's north end sidewalk repair should be completed during the week. Ongoing electrical projects on the A/B pier are expected to be finished before winter.

Vessel visits expected at the Marina include the *Godspeed* October 4-10 and *The Pride of Baltimore* October 24-26. Hall advised that staff should provide clear direction to school groups regarding bus parking.

Bernstein asked Spengler whether Founders Park maintenance can be improved to include, for example, better weed control and evening out the pathways, saying that the park's "shabby" appearance is inappropriate for a gateway to the City for those arriving by water. Spengler advised that Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) is responsible for hard-surface trails and RPCA is responsible for soft-surface trails. RPCA will resurface the

trails in Founders Park and Oronoco Park this year using Capital Facilities Maintenance Program (CFMP) funds. Spengler said RPCA has been balancing storm cleanup and normal maintenance responsibilities in recent months, that RPCA has only two staff responsible for all Waterfront maintenance activities, that when possible RPCA uses inmates to assist with maintenance, and that prioritizing maintenance responsibilities throughout the Waterfront area remains challenging, particularly in a year with so much storm-related damage.

Smedberg and other members emphasized their concern that maintenance of Waterfront area parks is broadly inadequate, especially for a gateway area of the City.

The Committee asked to receive an update on Waterfront maintenance at its October meeting.

### **Jones Point Park Improvements**

Macek said that Browand has reported that work on Jones Point Park is progressing and is expected to be completed by June 2012, and that the National Park Service is now operating the park instead of the City. Progress on Jones Point is reported on the RPCA website and via a Jones Point E-news alert that people can sign up for via the City website.

### **Minnie V Docking**

Work on the dock is proceeding on parallel tracks: the City is working with Potomac River Boat Company and an architect to design the dock as it awaits National Park Service approval for the work. The Minnie V has docked several times at the Marina for special events.

### **Report from Police Department**

Bergin reported several arrests related to thefts of items from cars, all in cases where items had been taken from unlocked residential cars.

Pennington said the police might consider having information available for the Waterfront Plan Work Group related to Marina-related crime statistics, particularly as it might relate to the design of the new pleasure boat marina proposed by the Waterfront Plan. Bergin said that creating a new pleasure boat marina might enhance marina security by removing boats from the City center where tourists congregate. He will consult his chief and others regarding any information that might be available on relevant security issues.

Members discussed their concerns about the serious safety problems created by bicyclists regularly ignoring traffic regulations, including stop signs, and encouraged the police to be more proactive in flagging down cyclists they see violating traffic rules. Pennington congratulated the City for having extended the bike lane the whole length of King Street.

### **Waterfront Committee FY2011 Annual Report.**

Members commended Macek for his draft of the Committee's Annual Report to City Council reviewing Committee activities during the previous fiscal year.

Moved by Pennington, seconded by Artemel, to approve the Annual Report as drafted. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

In response to a suggestion by Smedberg, it was agreed that the goals for FY2012 will be moved up in the report when RPCA staff finalizes it for submission to Council.

### **Waterfront Small Area Plan/ Waterfront Plan Work Group (WPWG)**

Macek, the Committee's representative on WPWG, provided an overview of WPWG actions to date: four meetings had been held since July, each Waterfront Plan topic area is being reviewed sequentially at the work sessions with the public realm issues thus far covered including flood mitigation, parking and traffic. After concluding public realm issues, WPWG will move on to private realm issues.

WPWG has been producing a set of draft of statements that represent planning principles for each element of the Waterfront Plan. The draft statements will then be used to create a structure for WPWG's report to Council reviewing the Plan. About 45 speakers representing organizations and/or themselves addressed WPWG's first community meeting held September 14. The next work session's agenda will review parks and open spaces; the Marina, and how the Plan incorporates art and history.

Moritz advised that the WPWG community meeting which had been scheduled for October 19 at Cameron Station is being rescheduled due to a conflict with the BRAC meeting that night.

Pennington reviewed his comments at the community meeting: he had submitted the Committee's position statement adopted at its June 29 meeting and, in his oral comments, had highlighted the need to implement the parking plan immediately on a trial basis, and urged that "intelligent parking signs" be used. On a related matter, Pennington advised that the previous evening the Environmental Policy Commission had endorsed the application of federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding for intelligent parking signs, which are in the City's FY2012 Capital Improvement Program. He questions whether some of those funds might be made available sooner to help improve parking in the Waterfront area.

Van Fleet said the parking plan is inadequate and reviewed his statement to WPWG calling for a complete traffic Waterfront analysis to be done that includes Union Street. Moritz said WPWG has endorsed adding Union Street to the traffic study area. Members discussed their frustration at the delay in the City implementation of improved parking signage – especially since, as Smedberg advised, funds for the new wayfinding signs are included in the current budget.

Moritz offered to check with T&ES to investigate why implementing the new parking wayfinding signs has been delayed.

Members discussed the urgent need to have short-term parking solutions implemented and to have a Parking Stakeholders Group address Waterfront parking issues now. Smedberg advised that the Parking Stakeholders Group of summer 2010 had not addressed either residential parking issues or the Union Street corridor and its circulation problems and that these issues need to be addressed now. Artemel volunteered, as a Waterfront resident, to serve on a Parking Stakeholders Group.

Smedberg suggested the Waterfront Committee draft a short letter to T&ES urging that a short-term solution to parking, including installation of the new parking signs, be implemented as soon as possible.

Van Fleet said he was concerned that the Army Corps of Engineers has not yet been asked to review environmental and planning aspects of the Flood Mitigation Plan and asked Moritz to discuss that with T&ES.

Hall asked Moritz if P&Z might consider proposing to Council the idea of using the parking restrictions imposed for the recent Art Festival—prohibiting parking on the unit block of King Street and along the unit block of South and North Union Streets—as a way to reduce traffic congestion at King and Union Street during events. Artemel said a traffic analysis needs to be done for the whole Waterfront area.

### **Waterfront Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Priorities**

Members discussed the Committee's proposed five Waterfront projects that were identified in June to recommend for priority funding consideration in the upcoming year's CIP. The five items are: the City Marina Utility Upgrade; the City Marina Seawall Maintenance; Marina Waterway Trash Deterrence; Marina Security Improvements; and Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead Repairs.

It was agreed that the need to upgrade electricity on the A/B piers will be added to the submission package's Marina Utility Upgrade discussion.

Spengler advised that two accounts fund these activities: the Capital Facilities Maintenance Program (CFMP) and the CIP. Out-year projects in the CIP budget include items such as bulkhead repairs. The CFMP over the next 10 years has an annual budget of \$50,000 for renovation projects and ongoing maintenance. If the A/B piers' electrical upgrade fits within that budget, it can be funded.

Spengler advised that it is important that public support be conveyed to Council for the priorities the Waterfront Committee recommends.

The Committee discussed the importance of adding public restrooms for Oronoco Bay Park and at a location along King Street, agreed to list restrooms as a priority needing attention, with details to be provided later, and agreed to add the issue to the Committee's October meeting's agenda.

Moved by Bernstein and seconded by Hafer, that the Committee adopt the five CIP priorities as stated, and that the cover letter will list six CIP priorities, including restrooms as a sixth Committee priority, with documentation for the sixth project to be submitted by the Committee to RPCA later. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Report from Economic Development Subcommittee**

Hall reported on the well-attended Waterfront Fun Days at the City Marina, thanking the many people who had made the activities possible and successful, including dockmaster Hixon and his Marina staff, the Alexandria Archaeology staff who served as guides for the well-attended Waterfront walks, and the Torpedo Factory artists and Seaport Foundation for providing hands-on children's activities and low-key music offered behind the Torpedo Factory. Activities were funded by volunteers and private donors. An additional Waterfront Fun Day may be scheduled in October. The activities program is expected to resume in May 2012.

The Subcommittee expects to brief the Committee at its November meeting on the status of Waterfront farmers market planning.

### **Announcements**

Manor announced that in the Paris tradition of holding an annual picnic at a secret location for guests who arrive all dressed in white, several Alexandrians had decided to arrange a September 29 "White Dinner on the Waterfront". People will meet in Market Square at 6:30 p.m. and move to another location for dinner. Attendees can bring their own food; food from Bittersweet will be available for sale.

Barnekov reported that The Alexandria Seaport Foundation will host Riverfest at the Robinson Terminal South on October 22, with a public demonstration of the Foundation's activities from noon to 3 PM, and music and food from 4 to 7 PM.

Artemel announced he would be sharing with Committee members pictures of a variety of waterfront areas he had visited over the summer.

Macek advised that upcoming Waterfront Plan Work Group (WPWG) work sessions were scheduled for September 21, September 28, and October 12.

Macek advised that the next Waterfront Committee meeting would be October 18 in Room 2000 in City Hall, the Committee's new permanent meeting location.

### **Public Comments**

Mike Young reported that flood mitigation actions implemented 15 years earlier on Prince Street near the Waterfront had successfully reduced nuisance flooding.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 9:30 a.m.